

# Scabies Fact Sheet

## What is scabies?

Human scabies is caused by a mite that burrows under the skin. Scabies can spread from one person to another by direct contact (touching).

## Who gets scabies?

Scabies is a common disease that may affect people of all races and social classes.

## What should I look for?

The earliest and most common symptoms of scabies are itching and skin rash especially at night time. This itchy rash looks like a pimple or thin, irregular burrow tracks made up of tiny blisters or bumps on your skin. Scabies may affect either your whole body or only localized warm areas of your skin, such as between your fingers, your wrist, elbow armpit, penis, nipple, waist, or buttocks.

## How can scabies be transmitted?

Scabies can be transmitted by direct and prolonged skin-to-skin contact with an person who has scabies. Scabies can also be transmitted by sharing bedding or clothing. The disease spreads easily to household members, roommates, and sexual partners of a person with scabies. Scabies can spread more easily in crowded settings like hospitals, child-care facilities, nursing homes, homeless shelters, and jails/prisons.

## What are the complications of scabies?

The severe itching of scabies causes people to scratch, which may cause breaks in the skin that allow bacteria to enter and cause skin infection.

## What should I do if I have itching and/or rash or I think I have been exposed?

You should consult with a doctor or go to the nearest emergency room or urgent care if:

- 1- You have a skin rash and are itching.
- 2- Your roommate, household member or sexual partner has been diagnosed with scabies or has a skin rash and is itching.
- 3- You live in a temporary residence or homeless shelter and have a recent onset of skin rash and itching.
- 4- You have used the bedding or clothing of someone who has been diagnosed with scabies.

## What should I do if I have been diagnosed with scabies?

- 1- Follow your doctor instructions. Also follow the directions on your prescription carefully.
- 2- All individuals who have had close skin-to-skin contact (sexual or personal) with you within the last month should be examined and treated for scabies even if they have no symptoms.
- 3- You and your contacts should be treated at the same time to avoid re-infection.
- 4- Do not share your clothing, bedding, towels or other personal items with anyone.
- 5- All bedding, clothing, and towels that you or your household, sexual, and close contacts used during the three days before treatment should be decontaminated by washing in hot water and drying in a hot dryer, by dry-cleaning, or by sealing in a plastic bag for at least a week. Scabies mites generally do not survive more than few days to a week away from human skin.
- 6- If you still have itching 2 to 4 weeks after treatment or if you notice new burrows or pimple-like rash lesions after treatment, contact your physician.